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Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE ON CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Submitted by

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(A.B., Boston University, 1929)

In partial fulfillment for requirements for the

degree of Master of Arts

1930

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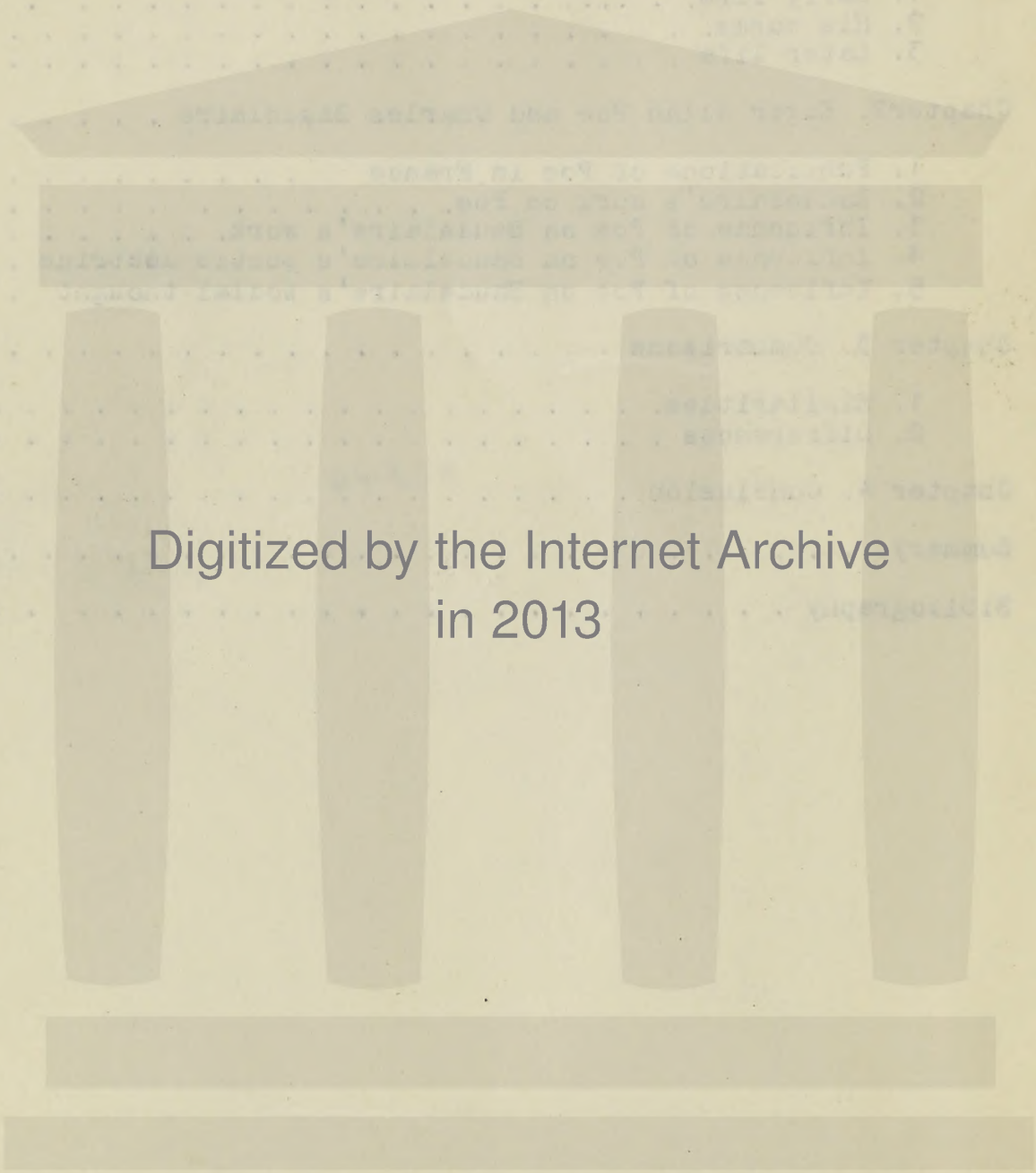

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The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe on Charles Baudelaire

"-Eh! qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?
-J'aime les nuages...les nuages qui passent...là-bas
...là-bas....les merveilleuses nuages!"
Petits Poèmes en Prose

Introduction

It has taken Americans almost a century to get the accurate and complete facts of Edgar Allan Poe's life. They have been most reluctant to admit his genius, to admit that perhaps their first judgment of him was wrong and even prejudiced. Does it not make us a bit cynical concerning the American mind to think that it took a man in a continental country to assert and affirm an American's genius, to point out to us that we were wrong?

Mallarmé, the French poet who directly followed in Baudelaire's steps, said of Poe's tomb:"Le tombeau d'Edgar Poe à Baltimore, un bloc de basalte que l'Amérique appuya sur l'ombre légère du Poète, pour sa sécurité qu'elle ne ressortît jamais."(1) Amazingly enough, there are many even today who are loth to accept Poe, who even repudiate him. They admit his genius but call him "charlatan"--rather a paradox.

Knowing neither men, their lives, or their works, I began reading them with a curious mind. I felt a rising enthusiasm for each of them, an enthusiasm that is as strong now as when I started in. And, as far as I can judge, it is a sincere enthusiasm. At the end of all my reading, I glanced through Henry James chapter on Baudelaire in the former's French Poets and Novelists, and there I saw this sentence:"An enthusiasm for Poe is the mark of a decidedly primitive stage of reflection."(2) As for Baudelaire,

(1) Mallarmé: Poésies, p.164:-Selaz, p.7
(2) Henry James, French Poets and Novelists, p.60

James concludes: "What the poet wished, doubtless, was to seem to be always in the poetic attitude; what the reader sees is a gentleman in a painful-looking posture staring very hard at a mass of things from which, more intelligently, we avert our heads."(1)

At the risk of being termed "less intelligent" and in a "decidedly primitive stage of reflection", I offer the following thesis, maintaining stubbornly my enthusiasm for both writers.

(1) Henry James, French Poets and Novelists: p.63

CHAPTER 1

Charles Baudelaire-His Life and Works

1. Early life.

There are two ways for a man of genius to present his works and himself to the public: he may give his writings little by little, arousing curiosity and a desire for more, gradually working up to a crescendo when he will give his all, his masterpiece; or he may work in secret, striving for a perfect work, which he will flash on the public suddenly, startling it out of its everyday complacency. Charles Baudelaire chose the latter way. He lived first and wrote afterwards. The result is a work that is a complement of his life, rather, it is the full blooming of his life. Les Fleurs du Mal is a small book, yet it contains the very essence of his every thought, feeling, and emotion. One cannot understand the book without knowing his life, and vice versa.

Baudelaire was born at Paris, April 9, 1821. At the time, his father was sixty-two and his mother twenty-seven---one reason, perhaps, for his nervous and strange temperament. His father died in 1827, and his mother remarried the following year. Immediately there was a tension at home, even though, M. Aupick, the stepfather, was good to Charles and sincerely loved him all his life. To relieve the situation, the boy was sent to a lycée in Lyons.

But school was too disciplinised for Charles. He hated rules and rebelled against the conventionality of them. As a student, he was mediocre, because he could not be methodically laborious. He did show his taste for letters , however, and even wrote some

poetry. His schoolmates did not understand him exactly--and, wisely, did not ~~rty~~ try to---rather, they saw him as an exalted being. He was a mystic, he was immoral, he was a cynic. Yet with all his disdain of school, he held one of the highest ramks. In 1839 he left the school at Lyons---expelled?

He headed directly for Paris and made his home in easy access to the Latin quarter and its literary circles. He knew Leconte de Lisle, Gérard de Nerval, L. Ménard, and others. Stirred by his surroundings, he announced his deires and intentions for authorship to his family. Practical-minded Aupick was upset. There were entreaties, hot replies, quarrels. Traveling might settle his mind, thought the family. So they set him aboard a ship for the Iles and India. But discipline was still distasteful to the young man. He showed utter disregard for merchandising, and at the first possible moment, he was sent back to Bordeaux. The trip was not without its effects, however, for he saw the tropics. They appealed to all that was exotic in him and they left him memories and images that he was to recall and use later.

He was now of age and able to claim his paternal heritage. He was twenty, with money and leisure for an apprenticeship in the literary field. Already he had much lived, much seen, much thought, much acted for himself. He settled down in Paris to an unstable life, moving continually, giving free rein to the naïve curiosity that made him contemplate and analyze every incident happening to him. He composed for himself a style of living and dressing that showed his inbred hostility of conventionality. He was a "dandy", using as his model a Byron clothed by a Brummel. The days he passed in a cafe, discussing matters

with literary friends; the nights, he usually spent in friends' homes wherever he felt inclined to go.

Do we see him clearly? Deroy, a painter and a friend of Baudelaire's who understood him, painted his portrait---a disturbing face; wide-open eyes, staring keenly; uplifted brows; sensuous lips; the mouth ready to speak; a beard, fine and curly about the cheeks and chin; hair heavy about the temples; a black suit with a white tie at the throat; sleeves of pleated muslin. He was twenty-five, an extravagant liver and thinker, famous, already called an original poet, and prematurely master of his mind and style.

2. His works.

Strangely enough, Baudelaire's first published works were not poems, but articles of criticism entitled Le Salon de 1845 and Le Salon de 1846. they were the outcome of the battle started by Delacroix in painting. Artist as he was, Baudelaire felt strongly on the controversy. He sided with Delacroix, thereby gaining the painter's friendship.

Le Salon de 1845 consists of judgments passed on paintings exhibited in a salon. The judgments but confirm Delacroix, yet they show remarkable penetration. They are written in a clear firm style and with a logic going straight to its end. Being an artist, Baudelaire enjoyed a thing well done, well executed, perfect in form and color, and he did not hesitate to say so. One may judge his taste by his own style which was irreproachable, excellent, free of all petty bickerings and flowery beautification. As a critic, he was an innate philosopher; he felt there could

be no great painting without great thought.

Le Salon de 1846 is particularly abounding in beautiful literary passages. It is full of generous admiration. It seems like a conversation almost, amusing, varied, followed without fatigue or boredom. Both these articles classified him with a reading public as among artistic writers---a position he already held among friends.

Led on by his enthusiasms, he joined the group about the Corfaire-Satan, a paper in which Baudelaire might carry on his expressions in art. He only edited two or three articles, which he later repudiated, being of an aristocratic nature and hating journalistic fighting. Instead, he used the newspaper offices as a salon for conversations.

It was at this time that he first ran across a story of Edgar Allan Poe. It struck his imagination, and he was so fired by his discovery of a foreign genius, that he resolved to make the man known to his countrymen. Hence, he worked faithfully and laboriously to translate Poe's works, a labor that continued for sixteen years, before he was satisfied to present it as a complete and perfect whole. So well had he caught the American's style and spirit, that the translation is decidedly worthy of and equal to the original.

But other events were crowding into his existence. The Revolution of 1848, with its enthusiasms, its energies appealed to to him strongly. But it appealed to him more as an artist than as a citizen. It aroused emotions in him. And emotions to him were the basis of living. He may not have taken an active part in the actual doings, but he felt its reactions. He wrote little in this period and settled in the extremities of Paris. He was

sent to Dijon to run a governmental paper, which he turned into a newspaper of opposition and eventually left.

As an undercurrent in his life there were the thoughts of his own poetry. By 1850 he had gathered together his poems under the title of Les Fleurs du Mal. They were not actually published until 1857. Then they were printed by his friend Malassis, who printed for the love of it, rather than for the pecuniary value of it.

The book was received in literary circles as the much awaited masterpiece. But censorship laid its unrelenting fingers upon it. Baudelaire was actually tried for having written an immoral and vicious book. Six of the hundred poems were cut out. Their author was genuinely naïvely astonished. He had offered them as a work of high spirituality---and they ahd been received with judiciary pursuit. His dignity as a poet was wounded; he never forgot the trial which he felt was an affront. In later editions he tried to explain himself and his works. He wrote bitterly on what he considered was unjust criticism. What hurt him most was that he was accused of having lived the vices he portrayed. The words "ferocity", "blasphemy", "depravation", "religious hypocrisy" were used against him. The continued attacks finally tired him. He was ill. He felt no one would understand him; if any one did, they would need no further explanations,

3. Later life.

The storm of his early life, the drain his works had brought on his mind, left Baudelaire a man with whitening hair, indulgent, no longer bitterly scornful. A second edition of his Fleurs du Mal had brought secured popularity. He was happy. The works that

followed increased and confirmed his popularity. They were:

Paradis Artificiels

Salon de 1859

Notice sur Théophile Gautier

Les Caricatures Française et Étrangères

Étude sur Constant Guys

Étude sur Delacroix

Petits Poèmes en Prose

Le Salon de 1859 well exemplifies his state of mind at the time. It is a serene, mature criticism on contemporary art. He loved art and its creators and he had identified himself with them and their efforts.

But he was tired. He planned to return to his mother's home to work for awhile and then to return to Paris to settle his affairs. "C'était trop beau." He left suddenly for Bruxelles in 1864, led there by a hope of making money by giving lectures and of publishing his works in a complete edition. Neither project worked out. He merely stayed on in Belgium disregarding his friends' letters begging him to return. He was working, he said. Yet in two years his work amounted only to the fifth volume of Poe. And he avowedly hated Belgium, its people, its life, its customs.

Rumors spread of an illness. Yet he appeared in Paris in 1865 for a short visit, apparently in good health. It was the last time his friends saw him thus, the last time they possessed him completely. Back in Bruxelles, he had to give in to his ill health. "Hysteria" it was named. One day he lost his speech. His mother went to him and brought him back to Paris.

The tragedy of it---he, who held his friends spellbound by

his quick retorts in conversation, he was speechless. For a while he attempted to continue the conversations, hoping his speech would return. At last he was forced to yield to his misfortune. He settled down to a state of apathy. He died August 31, 1867, at the age of forty-six.

Baudelaire had spent his life writing one small book of verse, a book of prose, some sane, sure, subtle criticism, and a translation more marvelous than the original. Never once had he sacrificed an atom of his convictions---perhaps therein lies the secret of his genius.

CHAPTER 2

Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire

1. Publications of Poe in France.

Louis Seylaz has gone to an extensive trouble of dating accurately the actual editions of Poe in France in the years 1845 to 1847, to show what contact Baudelaire might have made with the American writer. The following is his list:

1845-Revue Britannique(novembre): Le Scarabée D'or

La Quotidienne: Un meurtre sans exemple dans les fastes de la justice. (This article was not signed as originally written by Poe, although without a doubt it is his Murders of the Rue Morgue.)

1846-Revue Britannique(septembre): Une descente au Maelstrom (acknowledging Poe's authorship.)

1846-Commerce(octobre 12): Une sanglante énigme, by Forgues (not acknowledging Poe.)

1846-Revue des deux Mondes(octobre 15): Étude sur Poe, by Forgues.

1847-Démocratie Pacifique(janvier 27): Le Chat Noir, By Mme Isabelle Meunier.

1847-Démocratie Pacifique(janvier 31): Crimes de la Rue Morgue-Fragments d'Eiros et Charmion-Une descente au Maelstrom, also by Mme Meunier.

2. Baudelaire's work on Poe.

It was these latter translations by Mme Meunier that Baudelaire first read, thrilling and responding instinctively to the unknown author's words, thoughts and ideas. The first reaction was one of surprise---why surprise? Because he saw the striking resemblance between himself and an utter stranger. In one of his

letters he writes: "La première fois que j'ai ouvert un livre de lui, j'ai vu, avec épouvante et ravissement, non seulement des sujets rêvés par moi, mais des Phrases, pensées par moi, et écrites par lui, vingt ans auparavant." (1)

His first admiration and surprise turned quickly into a fiery enthusiasm to make Poe known to others. Everyone he met was asked "Do you know Poe?" and then would come the story of the Black Cat, vivid in its very improvisation. His friends must know, love, understand this man for whom he had such an instinctive sympathy. The enthusiasm increased into a desire to make Poe known to all France, setting himself the immense task of a perfect translation of Poe's complete works. To Sainte-Beuve he wrote: "Il faut, il faut, c'est-à-dire, je désire que Edgar Poe, qui n'est pas grand'chose en Amérique, devienne un grand homme pour la France." (2) He collected all his writings and set to work.

As a young boy, Baudelaire had been taught English by his mother who knew it well, so he could read Poe with ease. But to translate Poe was a different matter. The essential thing was to catch his thought and make a translation that literally followed the original as much as possible. He must know the exact meaning of a word and all its turns. He sought anyone who had a knowledge of Poe and questioned him minutely. If anyone he questioned admitted ignorance of Poe, Baudelaire would flare up in anger---never to have read or heard of Poe!

Asselineau tells of a visit he made with Baudelaire to an

(1) Lettre à Thoré: Lettres, p.362
(2) Lettres, p.91

American staying in a hotel in the boulevard of the Capucines; the American had known Poe personally. He was in the process of dressing, but Baudelaire would not wait. He intruded and asked his questions. The host was not favorable to Poe, saying he had a bizarre mind and a conversation that was not consecutive. Walking downstairs and out, Baudelaire jammed on his hat, saying violently of the host,"Ce n'est qu'un Yankee!" (We do not know what the host thought.)

Baudelaire spent hours in an English tavern in the Rue de Rivoli, talking to anyone who knew English. He drank whiskey and read Punch with the English grooms of the faubourg of Saint-Honoré. While he was publishing in the Moniteur, Les Aventures de Gordon Pym, he haunted taverns and hotel tables for English sailors who could give him exact terms of navigation.

The final result was what removed all of the ridiculous from his method. By continual application, insistance on perfection and exactness, he gained for himself this criticism on his work: "One of the most brilliant and accurate translations in literature."(1) The Spectator in England complimented him on his admirable work and remarked on his judicious criticism of the American writer.

It was by a painstaking method that Baudelaire achieved the task that he had set himself. He worked unevenly, but with a powerful intensity of concentration when he did work. He would go over a passage twenty times, quarrel for hours with himself over a word, stop in the middle of his work to mull over a thought while in conversation with others. He had noticed that:

(1)Encyclopaedia Britannica,Vol.2, p.342

"Il faut surtout bien suivre le texte littéral. Certaines choses seraient devenues bien autrement obscures, si j'avais voulu paraphraser mon auteur, au lieu de me tenir servilement attaché à la lettre. J'ai préféré faire du français penible et parfois baroque et donner dans toute sa verite la technique philosophique d'Edgar Poe."(1) He prepared his text for four years before beginning the actual manuscript. In those four years, he inquired, consulted, perfected himself in the knowledge of English amd entered into a deeper communication with Poe, whom he hailed as a literary Messiah.

The quick-thinking mind of the Frenchman had more than once thought of Poe's private life. Knowing no facts about it, he created an imaginary life for him, seeing him as a wealthy, happy, young man, using his leisure to write. The introduction to the first volume of Les Histoires Extraordinaires shows his almost light sentiment on Poe. It is full of anecdotes, citations, literary comparisons. But somewhere, somehow the terrible tragedy of Poe's life became known to him. His sympathy for him was increased, as is seen in this bit of a letter to Mrs. Clemm: "Deux ans avant la catastrophe qui brisa horriblement une existence si pleine et si ardente, je m'efforçais déjà de faire connaître Edgar Poe aux littérateurs de mon pays. Mais alors l'orage permanent de sa vie était pour moi une chose inconnue,... et quand aujourd'hui je compare l'idée fausse que je m'étais faite de sa vie avec ce qu'elle fut réellement,---l'Edgar Poe que mon imagination avait créé, riche, heureux, un jeune gentleman de genie vaguant quelquefois à la litterature au milieu des

(1) La Liberté de Penser, juillet, 1848: Seylaz,p.49

milles occupations d'une vie élégante,---avec le vrai Edgar , le pauvre Eddie, celui que vous avez aimé et secouru, celui que je ferai connaître à la France,---cette ironique antithèse me remplit d'une insurmontable attendrissement. Plusieurs années sont passées, et son fantôme m'a toujours obsédé."(1)

When Griswold's Mémoire came out, he was ready to guess all the hatred, ill-will, and jealousy between the lines. He came to Poe's defense quickly, urged on by deep sufferings and miseries of his own. At last he felt himself completely identified with his master, his hero---he was undergoing for Poe, the latter's hatreds, loves, friendships. At the time he wrote to his mother: "Comprends-tu maintenamt pourquoi au milieu de l'affreuse solitude qui m'environne, j'ai si bien compris le genie de Poe, et pourquoi j'ai si bien écrit son abominable vie?"(2)

This evolution of feeling and comprehension was shown in his Edgar Allan Poe-sa vie et ses oeuvres, appearing first in La Revue de Paris, 1856, and later serving as a preface to the second volume, Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires. The work is remarkable, showing Baudelaire's insight of the man, the artist, the work. It shows the two in complete communion with each other, a unique phenomenon in literary history. His arguments and revelations of Poe's genius are irrefutable. These studies plus the translations mark the most beautiful monument and tribute ever paid by one author to another.

It was Baudelaire's purpose to write a third and entire

(1) Oeuvres Posthumes, p.243
(2) Seylaz, p.48

volume on Poe's personality, talent, and esthetics. Unfortunately, it was never realized. But to the end of his life he upheld the glowing admiration of his earlier days. Just before his death, his hand feebly traced as a last prayer---"Dieu, Mariette, et Edgar Poe."(1)

(1) Journaux Intimes, Oeuvres Posthumes, p.135
(2) Note-The complete works of Baudelaire on Poe are as follows:

1848	La Liberté de Penser(juillet)	-La Révélation Mesmerique
1852	La Revue de Paris	-Les Puits et le Pendule
	Magasin des Familles	-Philosophy of Furniture
1853	La Revue de Paris	-Le Coeur Révélateur
	L'Artiste	-Le Corbeau
1854	Le Pays(25 juillet)	-Translations of Poe with preface to Mrs. Clemm (continued to April 1855)
1856	Michel-Levy	-Histoires Extraordinaires
1857	" "	-Les Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires
1858	" "	-Les Aventures de Gordon Pym (aussi dans Le Moniteur)
1864	" "	-Euréka (aussi dans La Revue Internationale)
1865	" "	-Histoires Grotesques et Sérieuses

3. The influence of Edgar Allan Poe on Baudelaire.

The translations and commentaries on Poe by Baudelaire consist of about one-third of the latter's whole life work. He spent twenty years in re-living, re-creating the works of the American. Did he live in so deep an intimacy, enthusiasm, and admiration for the man---was the influence so great---that he lost his own originality, that he could no longer gush spontaneously at the call of inspiration? Did he imitate Poe? Baudelaire was accused of imitation during his life; he answered the accusation thus: "Vous doutez de ce que je vous dis? Vous doutez que de si étonnants parallélismes géométriques puissent se présenter dans la nature? Eh bien, on m'accuse, moi, d'imiter Poe! Savez-vous pourquoi j'ai si patiemment traduit Poe? Parce qu'il me ressemblait."(1)

No, we cannot say that he imitated him. Rather, the two worked in a mysterious collaboration. We must remember that Poe came into Baudelaire's life, when the latter was already master of himself. Poe added nothing to the genius of Baudelaire, he transformed no essential atom of it---what he did was to reenforce it and confirm it.

Baudelaire has been accused of plagiarism. But again, we must remember that his book of verse was already thought out and written before he even read a line of Poe. His reading of Poe did not change his first original thoughts, it merely showed their parallelism with those of Poe. Baudelaire himself says: "---Alors je trouvai, croyez-moi si vous voulez, des poèmes et des nouvelles dont j'avais eu la pensée, mais vague et confuse, mal ordonnée, et que Poe avait su combier et mener à la

(1) Lettres, p.362

perfection."(1) There is too much sincerity in those lines ever to have been written by a plagiarist.

Yet there was an influence on Baudelaire, evident in his work and thought, after his concentration on Poe. Not an influence that was a transforming action, a revelation of new ideas or a new art, a stamping imprinted on one mind by another; it was an influence that was translated into an admiration, enthusiasm, cult,---an influence that firmly established their pre-existing affinities.

Analogies of works of two men are always interesting as conclusive comparisons. Leconte de Lisle remarked on Baudelaire: "Son oeil plonge en cercles infernaux encore inexplorés."(2) In the analogies that follow it is more than ever noticeable that the remark fits both the American and the Frenchman.

In the preface to the first edition of Les Fleurs du Mal, Baudelaire acknowledges a borrowing from Poe for the following two poems:

"Ils marchent devant moi, ces Yeux pleins de lumières,
. . . . . .
Me sauvant de tout piège et de tout péché grave,
Ils conduisent mes pas dans la route du Beau;
Ils sont mes serviteurs et je suis leurs esclave;
Tout mon être obéit a ce vivant flambeau.
Charmants Yeux, vous brillez de la clarté mystique
Qu'ont les cierges brulant en plein jour; le soleil
Rougit, mais n'éteint pas leur flamme fantastique;
. . . . . .
Vous marchez en chantant le réveil de mon ame,
Astres dont nul soleil ne peut flétrir la flamme!"

-Le Flambeau Vivant (3)

(1) Lettres, p.176
(2) Leconte de Lisle: Les Poètes Contemporains Ch. Baudelaire
(3) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.149

This is Poe's version:

"Only thine eyes remained
...Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
...They lead me through the years.
They are my ministers---yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and to enkindle---
My duty to be saved by their bright light,...
And purified in their electric fire. ....
They fill my soul with Beauty (Which is Hope),
And far up in Heaven---the stars I kneel to
In the sad silent watches of the night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still---two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguishable by the sun!"

-To Helen (1)

Baudelaire:

"---Un de ces grands abandonnés
Au rire éternel condamnés
Et qui ne peuvent plus sourire."

-L'Heautontimoroumenos (2)

Again Poe:

"A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh--but smile no more."

-The Haunted Palace (3)

Poe's musical ear was supersensitive to sound. It was a favorite idea of his that he could hear night approaching. Baudelaire, equally a musician, expresses the same thought in one of his most moving, most beautiful sonnets:

"Entends, ma chère, entends la douce nuit qui marche."

-Recueillement (4)

It recurs in Poe several times:

". . . . . and will list
To the sound of coming darkness (known
To those whose spirit harken). . . . ." (5)

-Tamerlane (5)

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.10, p.86
(2) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.149
(3) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.10, p.32
(4) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.239
(5) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.10, p.105

In the 1827 edition, there were these notes to the above passage: "I have often fancied that I could distinctly hear the sound of darkness, as it steals over the horizon---a foolish fancy, perhaps, but not more unintelligible than to see music---." (1) Later these notes were transferred to this passage:

> "Witness the murmur of grey twilight
> . . . . . .
> That stealeth ever on the ear of him
> Who, musing, gazeth on the distamce dim,
> And sees the darkness coming as a cloud---
> Is not its form---its voice---most palpable and loud?"
>
> -Al Araaf (2)

Both poets were sensitive to the fascinating power of eyes:

> "Par ces deux grands yeux noirs, soupiraux de ton âme,
> O démon sans pitié! verse-moi moins de flamme."
> -Sed Non Satiata (3)

> "Tes yeux creux sont peuplés de visions nocturnes,
> Et je vois, tour à tour. . . . . .
> La folie et l'horreur, froides et taciturnes."
>
> -La Muse Malade (4)

> "De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles:
> Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés eternelles."
>
> -La Beaute (5)

> "The expression of the eyes of Ligeia!. . . what was it---that something more profound than the well of Democritus---which lay far within the pupils of my beloved?. . . Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs!"
>
> -Ligeia (6)

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.10, p.218
(2) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.10, p.114
(3) Les Fleurs du Mal, P,123
(4) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.98
(5) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.111
(6) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.1, p.74

". . . I met the glance of her meaning eyes, and then my soul sickened and became giddy with the giddiness of one who gazes downward into some dreary and unfathomable abyss."

-Morella (1)

A beautiful woman was to Poe the ideal expression af Beauty. And the death of such a woman was inevitably the greatest tragedy. He expressed this idea in Ligeia and Eleonora:

"And then and there I threw myself hurriedly at the feet of Eleonora, and offered up a vow, to herself and to Heaven. . . that I would in no manner prove recreant to her memory. . . And she said to me not many days afterwards, tranquilly dying, that, because of what I had done for the comfort of her spirit, she would watch over me in that spirit when departed, and, if so it were permitted her, return to me visibly in the watches of the night. . ."

-Eleonora (2)

Baudelaire has verses in the same thought:

"Dors en paix, dors en paix, étrange créature,
Dans ton tombeau mystérieux;

Ton époux court le monde, et ta forme immortelle
Veille près de lui quand il dort;
Autant que toi sans doute il te sera fidèle
Et constant jusqu'à la mort."

-Une Martyre (3)

Self-torture they both practiced and wrote about:

"Je suis la plaie et le couteau!
Je suis le soufflet et la joue!
Je suis les membres et la roue,
Et la victime et le bourreau,
Je suis de mon coeur le vampire!"

-L'Heautontimoroumenos (4)

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol. 1, p.64
(2) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.1, p.101
(3) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.311
(4) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.311

> "The student now guesees the state of the case, but it is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst of self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer, 'Nevermore', with the indulgence to the extreme, of this self-torture."
>
> -The Philosophy of Composition(1)

The torment of an inner secret harbored and prodded by conscience is revealed by both men:

> "Mon coeur, que tout irrite,
> . . . . . .
> Ne veut pas te montrer son secret infernal."
>
> -Sonnet d'Automne (2)

> "Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir."
>
> -La Vie Antérieure (3)

Poe's images aroused in an attempt to describe the mysterious unknown in Mare Tenebrarum, fired Baudelaire to attempt similar descriptions:

> "The sun rose with a sickly yellow lustre. . . It gave out no light, properly so called, but a dull and sullen glow without reflection. . . It was a dim, silver-like rim, alone, as it rushed down the unfathomable ocean. . . All in the immediate vicinity of the ship is blackness of eternal light, and a chaos of foamless water. . ."
>
> -Manuscript Found in a Bottle(4)

> "Le soleil s'est noyé dans sang qui se fige."
>
> -Harmonie du Soir (5)

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.6
(2) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.187
(3) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.103
(4) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.2, p.272
(5) Les Fleurs du Mal, p.155

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"C'est un univers morne, a l'horizon plombe;
. . . . . .
Un soleil sans chaleur plane au-dessus six mois,
Et les six autres mois la nuit couvre la terre;
C'est un pays plus nu que la terre polaire;
Ni bêtes, ni ruisseaux, ni verdure, ni bois!

Or il n'est pas d'horreur au monde qui surpasse
La froide cruauté de ce soleil de glace."

-De Profundis Clamavi (1)

"Et comme le soleil dans son enfer polaire,
Mon coeur ne sera plus qu'un bloc rouge et polaire."

-Chant d'Automne (2)

From The Adventures of Gordon Pym, Baufdelaire borrowed one of the most repulsive details:

"---On his back from which a huge portion of his shirt had been torn, leaving it bare, sat a huge gull, busily gorging itself with the horrible flesh, its bill and talons deep buried, and its white plumage spattered all over with blood. . . The bird, with much apparent difficulty, drew out its crimsoned head, and, after eyeing us for a moment, arose lazily from the body on which it had been feasting, and. . . Hovered there awhile with a portion of clotted and liverlike substance in its beak. The horrid morsel dropped at length. . . "

-Adventures of Gordon Pym (3)

"Des féroces oiseaux perchés sur leur pâture
Détruisaient avec rage un pendu déjà mûr,
Chacun plantant, comme un outil son bec impur
Dans tous les coins sanguinants de cette pourriture."

-Un Voyage à Cythère (4)

"Épiait le moment de reprendre au squelette
Le morceau qu'elle avait lâché."

-Une Charogne (5)

(1) Les Fleurs du Mal; p.130
(2) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.172
(3) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.5, p.142
(4) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.319
(5) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.127

Both men lived a life governed solely by the law of Beauty; and Beauty included the ugly, the strange, the horrible:

> "There is no exqusite beauty without some strangeness in the proportions."
>
> -Ligeia (1)

> "Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu de l'abime,
> O Beauté? Ton regard, infernal et divin,
> Verse confusément le crime et le bienfait,
> . . . . . .
> De tes bijoux l'Horreur n'est pas le moins charmant,
> Et le Meurtre. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Que tu mennes du ciel ou de l'enfer, qu'importe,
> O Beauté! monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu!
> Si ton oeil, ton souris, ton pied, m'ouvrent la porte
> D'un infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu?"
>
> -Hymne à la Beauté (2)

The following sonnet of Baudelaire which all commentaries and critics recognize as the expression of the doctrine of Symbolism:

> "La nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
> Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
> L'homme y passe à travers la forêt des symboles
> Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.
>
> Comme des longs échos qui de loin se confondent
> Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
> Vaste comme la nuit et la clarté,
> Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.
>
> Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfant,
> Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,
> ---Et d'autres corrompus, riches et triomphants,
> Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
> Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
> Qui chantent le transport de l'esprit et des sens."
>
> -Correspondances (3)

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.1, p.72
(2) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.116
(3) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.92

but expresses corresponding ideas of Poe:

> "I believe that odours have an altogether peculiar force in affecting us through association; a force differing essentially from that of objects addressing the touch, the taste, the sight or the hearing."
>
> -Marginalia (1)

> ". . . ---for a voice was there
> How solemnly pervading the calm air!
> A sound of silence on the startled ear
> Which dreamy poets name "The music of the sphere."
>
> Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
> 'Silence'---which is the merest word of all.
> All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
> Flap shadowy sounds from visionary things---
>
> Young flowers were whispering in melody
> To happy flowers that night, and tree to tree;
> . . . . . .
> The murmur that springs from
> From the growing of grass
> Are the music of things."
>
> -Al Araaf (2)

Baudelaire wrote one play, L'Ivrogne, which was accepted in advance for publication and production at the Odéon. The subject of it was a drunkard who killed his wife---the plot in the Black Cat. The anticlimax was borrowed almost textually from The Imp of Perversity. The end of Poe's story:

> "But there arrived at length an epoch, from which the the pleasurable feeling grew, by scarcely perceptible gradations, into a haunting and harassing thought. . . I could scarcely get rid of it for an instant. . . One day, whilst sauntering along the streets, I arrested myself in the act of murmuring, half aloud, these customary syllables. . . "I am safe."
>
> At first, I made an effort tom shake off this nightmare of the soul. I walked vigorously---faster ---still faster---at length I ran. I felt a maddening desire to shriek aloud. . . I still quickened my pace. I bounded like a maaman through the crowded thorough-

(1) Lipincott: Vol.6, p.120
(2) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.10, p.111

fares. At length, the populace took alarm, and pursued me. I felt then the consummation of my fate. . . For a moment, I experienced all the pangs of suffocation; I became blind, and deaf, and giddy; and then, some invisible fiend, I thought, struck me with his broad palm on the back. The long-imprisoned secret burst forth from my soul.

They say that I spoke with a distinct enunciation, but with marked emphasis and passionate hurry, as if in dread of interruption before concluding the brief but prgnant sentences that consigned me to the hangman and to hell.

Having related all that was necessary for the fullest judicial conviction, I fell prostrate in a swoon."(1)

-The Imp of the Perverse

In outlining the plot of the play in a letter to a friend, Baudelaire described thus the dénouement:

"Le cinquième acte, le denouement, c'est-à-dire, la dénonciation du coupable par lui-même sous la pression d'une obsession.

Notre homme a fui. . . Il pense à s'engager comme matelot.---Il boit effroyablement.----Cette idée: 'Je suis libre! Je suis tranquille!---On ne saura jamais rien.'---Et comme il boit toujours, et qu'il boit effroyablement depuis plusieurs mois, sa volonté dimimue toujours,---et l'idee fixe finit par se faire jour par quelques paroles prononcées à voix haute. Sîtot qu'il s'en aperçoit, il cherche à s'étourdir par la boisson, par la marche, par la course; ---mais l'étrangeté de ses allures le fait remarquer.---Un homme qui court a évidemment fait quelque chose. On l'arrête; alors---avec une volubilite, une ardeur, une emphase extraordinaires, avec une minutie extrême,---très vite, très vite, comme s'il craignait de n'avoir pas le temps d'achever, il raconte tout son crime.---Puis il tombe évanoui." (2)

In a letter to his mother April 1, 1861, Buadelaire mentions a book he has dreamed of writing for two years. Its title was to be, Mon coeur mis à nu---"Oh! si jamais celui-là voit le jour, Les Confessions de Jean-Jacques Rousseau paraîtront pâles." (3) The idea for the work can be directly traced back to a paragraph

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.2, p.45
(2) Lettres, p.60
(3) Seylaz: p.57

in Poe's Marginalia:

> "If any man has a fancy to revolutionize at one effort the universal world of human thought, and human sentiment, the opportunity is his own---the road to immortal renown lies straight, open, and unencumbered before him. All that he has to do is to write and publish a very little book. Its title should be s simple---a few plain words---'My Heart Laid Bare.' But---this little book must be true to its title. . . But to write it---there is the rub. No man dare write it. No man will ever write it. No man could write it, even if he dared. The paper would shrivel and blaze at every touch of the fiery pen." (1)

No doubt Baudelaire had been piqued at this challenge. What a chance to be an exception, to surprise, to sincerely cry out his indignations, his scorns! But the dream remained only as notes published after his death.

One must not put too much stress on these analogies---let it always be kept in mind that Baudelaire was an artist of original genius, and as such, he could always convert his own pollen into honey.

4. Poe's Influence on Baudelaire's Poetic Doctrine.

Poe's poems are rebels to translations, so it was not they that influenced French poetry, it was his poetic doctrine. And it was through Baudelaire that the very doctrine was presented, explained, and exemplified to French poets of the period. The influence can be traced by careful study of the various treatises on art written by Baudelaire. Though they are primarily concerning art and paintings, the conclusions drawn can be applied to all fields of art.

The Salons of 1845 and 1846 are outbursts of a juvenile

(1) Lipincott: p.110

enthusiasm. His thoughts, charming as they may be, are not tabulated into a definite outline form. As he thinks, so he writes, uttering profound thoughts. He had not thought of defining terms, he merely stated them. He speaks of Romanticism and does not try to give a meaning:

> "Pour moi, le romantisme est l'expression la plus récente, la plus actuelle du beau." (1)
> "Le romantisme n'est précisement ni dans le choix des sujets ni dans la vérité exacte, mais dans la manière de sentir." (2)
> "Ils ont cherché en dehors et c'est en dedans qu'il etait seulement possible de le trouver. . . Qui dit romantisme dit art moderne,---c'est-à-dire intimité, spiritualité, aspiration vers l'infini." (3)

The following sets of quotations show well the spirit of the works:

> "---Un tableau doit avant tout reproduire la pensée intime de l'artiste, qui domine le modèle, comme le le créateur la création." (4) For un tableau one may substitute un poème.
> "Toute efflorraison est spontanee, individuelle. . . L'artiste ne relève que de lui-même. . Il a été son roi, son prêtre, et son Dieu." (5)

He cries for the original, the new, the unexpected, which is truly romantic art. He remarks upon the intimate analogy between colors, sounds, perfumes.

But Poe intervened between the first papers and his later Salon de 1859, his preface to Les Fleurs du Mal, his Journaux Intimes, his Art Romantique. Poe intervened with his precise and carefully thought out definitions of Poetry, art, and beauty; with his talk on the power of words, the value of sounds, the importance of refrain and repetition. Baudelaire studied these

(1) Curiosités Esthétiques: p.35
(2) Curiosités Esthétiques: p.35
(3) Curiosités Esthétiques: p.34
(4) Curiosités Esthétiques: p. 104
(5) Curiosités Esthétiques: p.221

principles withe care and also studied Poe's application of them. Briefly, here is a summary of Poe's principles and views on art and poetry:

1. A poem must be short.
2. A poem must try to create an impression of beauty.
3. Newness and originality is essential and indispensable in all poetic work.
4. The vague, the indefinite is another essential element of poetry.
5. Imagination requires method and constructive ability for proper expression.
   a. Patience.
   b. Sustained attention.
   c. Capacity for concentration.
   d. Possession of oenself.
   e. Scorn of all prejudices.
   f. Energy and labor.
6. In prose, all materials should be subordinated to an effect or impression---beauty is no longer the essential aim. The qualities of a story:
   a. A well-ordered plan.
   b. Gradation-what rhythm is to poetry.
   c. Avoidance of direct expression-leaving the field free to the imagination.

It is not strange that with the close affinity existing between the two men, Baudelaire should accept integrally the doctrines of Poe. Strange would it have been, had it not turned out so. The following is an example of the result of close study of the application of Poe's principles on repetition and form:

"J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore,
Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal
Une miraculeuse aurore;
J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal

Un être qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze,
Terrasser l'énorme Satan;
Mais moi que jamais ne visite l'extase
Et un théâtre où l'on attend
Toujours, toujours en vain, l'être aux ailes de gaze."

-L'Irréparable (1)

The books, or articles, in which Baudelaire expressed Poe's

(1) Les Fleurs du Mal: p.168

doctrines as those he chose to make his own, have been mentioned.

The citations below show the direct comparisons of the doctrines:

> "We (Americans) have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in true poetic dignity and force:- but the simple fact is that would we permit ourselves to look into our own souls we should immediately there discover that under the sun neither exists nor <u>can</u> exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble, than this very poem, this poem <u>per se</u>, this poem which is a poem and nothing more, this poem written solely for the poem's sake." (1)

> "Aucun poème ne sera si grand, si noble, si véritablement digne du nom de poème, que celui qui aura été écrit uniquement pour le plaisir d'écrire un poeme." (2)

> "With a deep reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would nevertheless limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcations. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them with dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All <u>that</u> which is so indispensable in Song is precisely all <u>that</u> with which <u>she</u> has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreathe her with gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, impassioned. In a word we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical." (3)

> "La poésie ne peut pas, sous peine de mort ou de défaillance, s'assimiler à la science ou à la morale; elle n'a pas la Vérité pour objet, elle n'a qu'elle-même. Les modes de démonstration de vérité sont autres et sont ailleurs. La Vérité n'a rien à faire avec les chansons. Tout ce qui fait le charme, la grâce, l'irrésistible d'une chanson enleverait à la Vérité son autorité et son pouvoir. Froide, calme, impassible, l'humeur démonstrative repousse les diamants et les fleurs de la muse; elle est donc absolument l'inverse de l'humeur de la poétique." (4)

Both men agree that Beauty plays the leading part in poetry.

(1) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.6, p.10
(2) <u>Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires</u>: p.19
(3) Stedman and Woodberry: Vol.6, p.10
(4) <u>Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires</u>: p.19

In what was to be the preface to the second edition of Les Fleurs du Mal, Baudelaire wrote:

> "J'avais primitivement l'intention d'expliquer quelques quetions très simples, totalement obscurcies par la lumière moderne: Qu'est-ce la poésie? Quel est son but? De la distinction du Bien avec le Beau; de la Beauté dans le Mal; que le rythme et la rime repondent dans l'homme aux immortels besoins de la monotonie, de symetrie, et de surprise; de l'adoption du style au sujet; de la vanité et du danger de l'inspiration, etc.,etc." (1)

These words, one can see, are the summary of the Poetic Principle. Had Baudelaire not given up the writing of the preface, it undoubtedly would have been the first manifesto of the new school of poetry, which had its start in Baudelaire. We would have had direct evidence of all the new French school of poetry owed to Edgar Allan Poe.

5. The Influence of Poe on Baudelaire's Social Thought.

As a young man living in more or less bourgeois surroundings, Baudelaire had a strong faith in the middle class. The Revolution of 1848 but increased this faith. His Salon de 1845 was dedicated to the bourgeois: "Vous êtes la majorité,---nombre et intelligence;---donc vous êtes la force,---qui est la justice."(2) The bourgeois needed art---"Vous pouvez jurer trois jours sans pain;---sans poésie jamais."(3) They should learn to appreciate art, since they were all capable of appreciation. They had not done so up to that time because artists had scorned them, and felt they were incapable of understanding it. All that was necessary was to show the bourgeois what the beautiful was and they would

(1) Oeuvres Posthumes, p.12
(2) Curiosités Esthétiques, p.77
(3) Curiosités Esthétiques, p.77

appreciate it.

Baudelaire was equally optimistic on the idea of progress which he termed as philosophy: "Je veux parler de l'idée du progres. Ce fanal obscur, ØÞ£¢Ø invention du philosophisme actuel, brevété sans garantie de la nature ou de la Divinité, cette lanterne moderne, jette des ténèbres sur tous les objets de la connaissance; la liberté s'évanouit, la chatiment disparait." (1)

What a radical change his feelings underwent as he Expressed them in the Salon de 1859 and in what would have been the preface to the second edition of Les Fleurs du Mal!

> Le chien et le flacon:—"Ah! misérable chien, si je vous avait offert un paquet d'excréments, vous l'auriez flairé avec délices et peut-être dévoré. Ainsi, vous-même, indigne compagnon de ma triste vie, vous ressemblez au public, à qui il ne faut jamais présenter des parfums délicats qui l'éxaspèrent, mais des ordures soigneusement choisies." (2)

He had given up entirely the idea that the public could be educated. He almost scorned the public with bitterness. And why? Partly because of the trial he had undergone over Les Fleurs du Mal, but mostly because Poe had been equally scornful of the public, after suffering at its hands. Science, he felt, was proud and pretentious, short-sighted, materialistic; it drew a curtain between people and the Beyond. The source of moral progress, therefore, was not in science, but in man's heart. He also refused to accept the idol of American democracy. It may have been mere projection of Baudelaire's miseries and feelings to Poe's sufferings, if one may use such a psychological term here, that made him adopt Poe's theories. Nevertheless, the influ- of Poe on Baudelaire's social thought stands out clearly.

(1) Curiosités Esthétiques: p.219
(2) Petits Poèmes en Prose: p.20

CHAPTER 3

Comparisons

1. Similarities.

If we look at portraits of Baudelaire and Poe, we cannot help noticing that there are physical similarities in the two men. Both are tall, both are dark. The eyes of both stir strange feelings in us; they are mobile, velvety, fascinating. Both were of aristocratic natures and had a meticulous care of their personal appearance. In temperament, they are both verging on the neurotic type, although charming and seductive in their grace of manner.

Esmé Stuart wrote a comprehensive bit of comparison of the two in life, thought, and work: "Both were brought up luxuriously; both felt that literature alone could be their vocation; both loved passionately the woman they called mother; both threw off the authority of their adopted father; both were faithful as lovers, one to his wife, the other to his unworthy mistress; both fell hopelessly foul of the Public,---that judge they would neither of them acknowledge or bow down to; both were, in consequence, literary outcasts; both sought by deletarious means to drown sordid reality and to evoke dreams of unnattainable Beauty; both sought diligently for the choice word, the rare sensation; both looked upon the commonplace as a mortal enemy; both strove, when they found themselves plunged into an abyss of misery, to retrieve their mistake, and both succumbed to the fatal wish to soar into regions too elevated for humanity. . both were scorned by a too righteous world of sinners." (1)

(1) Esmé Stuart - A Literary Affinity - Seylaz, p.57

2. Differences.

The parallelism could be drawn on indefinitely, yet we must not go on to the extent that we are led to confuse the two. For each one wasa an individual in himself with distinct and differing characteristics, particularly in the actual works of each and in their personal thoughts and actions.

Poe's poetry is more that of one striving to reach a transcendental ideal. It transports one into realms of esoteric dream worlds, far from reality. Earthly passion has no place in his poems. He has no 'Vénus Noire'. Poe is the master of the grotesque---there is too much of the egoism of woman in him. He is distinctly a psychologist and metaphysician combined.

Baudelaire, on the other hand, is not an abstract mystic. He is too human for that. Reality enveloped him to the extent that all his food for thought came from the physical. He believed it possible to arouse such or such a sensation in a reader. His poems are more plastic more pictorial.

The two distinctly differ in sensibilité---Poe's senses of sight and hearing were overdeveloped, while Baudelaire's senses of touch and smell are those he recurs to most often. Yet even as we write these words, we have reminiscences of Poe from each page of Les Fleurs du Mal, some vague and obscure, some precise.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

It has been hinted above that had Baudelaire published his preface to the second edition to Les Fleurs du Mal, it would have served as a manifesto for the school of symbolism following and growing out of Baudelaire's poetry. What is this symbolism? Larousse defines it thus: "Système de symboles destinés à rappeler des faits ou à exprimer des croyances."

Poe had logically arrived at this theory of symbolism, though he never termed it as such. To him art was the reproduction of what the senses perceive in nature across the veil of the soul. Simple imitation of what is perceived in nature is not enough. Imagination must be employed to change the real into a piece of art. And what are these conclusions but the theory of symbolism.

Baudelaire accepted those theories, recreated them into his own works, and threw French poetic expression into the channels of symbolism---and there lies the importance of Poe's influence on Baudelaire. As a final tribute to the father of symbolism and to his literary brother and affinity, may we say: "---Ils ont remué les mondes de melancolie et de désespoir incurable, ramassés comme des nuages dans le ciel intérieur de l'homme; ils ont projeté des rayons splendides, éblouissants, sur le Lucifer latent qui est installé dans tout coeur humain."

SUMMARY

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), initiator of the symbolic movement in poetry in France, after a short education and a bit of travel to the tropics, settled down to a literary career in Paris. He entered the controversy on painting started by Delacroix, writing several pamphlets on art. He took part in spirit in the Revolution of 1848. Stumbling on Edgar Allan Poe's stories one day, he noticed a similarity between himself and the stranger. With enthusiasm he undertook to translate all of Poe's works, a labor that lasted sixteen years of his life. In 1857, Baudelaire collected and published his own poems undert the title of Les Fleurs du Mal. In these, as in all his later works, there are traces of Poe's influence on him,---the influence is not only seen in his works but in his poetic doctrines and social thought. There are many similar qualities in both the men, and several important differences, mainly in their personal thoughts and actions, and in their poetic expressions though following the same doctrines. The important outcome of the influence of the American on the Frenchman is that Baudelaire through Poe gave rise to symbolism in poetry---a movement that lasted fifteen years in France, and from thence led on to modern poetry.

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